

U.S. Department of Education
2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Type of School: (Check all that apply) ☒ Elementary ☐ Middle ☐ High ☐ K-12 ☐ Other
☐ Charter ☐ Title I ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice

Name of Principal: Ms. Nonnie Hughes

Official School Name: Morning Star School

School Mailing Address:
830 Arnold Street
Bozeman, MT 59711-6193

County: Gallatin State School Code Number*: 0501

Telephone: (406) 522-6500 Fax: (406) 522-6550

Web site/URL: http://www.bsd7.org/morningstar/ E-mail: nonnie.hughes@bsd7.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Kirk Miller

District Name: Bozeman Public Schools Tel: (406) 522-6001

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Gary Lusin

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:
- | | |
|----------|---------------------|
| 6 | Elementary schools |
| 2 | Middle schools |
| 0 | Junior high schools |
| 1 | High schools |
| 0 | Other |
| 9 | TOTAL |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 9195

Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 3652

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☐ Urban or large central city
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
☐ Suburban
☒ Small city or town in a rural area
☐ Rural

4. 16 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

 If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	1	1	2	7			0
K	36	46	82	8			0
1	42	41	83	9			0
2	57	44	101	10			0
3	44	37	81	11			0
4	46	56	102	12			0
5	46	35	81	Other			0
6			0				
			TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL				532

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
0 % Asian
0 % Black or African American
1 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
98 % White
0 % Two or more races
100 % **Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 5 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	13
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	17
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	30
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	550
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.055
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	5.455

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 0 %

Total number limited English proficient 0

Number of languages represented: 0

Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8 %

Total number students who qualify: 40

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 9 %

Total Number of Students Served: 49

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>8</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>9</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>30</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>24</u>	<u>1</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>1</u>	<u>11</u>
Support staff	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
Total number	<u>35</u>	<u>23</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 22 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	89%	92%	91%	92%	93%
Teacher turnover rate	8%	19%	18%	7%	16%

Please provide all explanations below.

Our daily teacher attendance is under 95% due to both Contractual and Professional leaves. In addition to sick leave our district provides 5 Personal Leave Days and three Planning Days to teachers and much of our professional development takes place during the school day. Our staff is highly regarded for the expertise they bring to Curriculum Committees which also meet during the day on occasion in our district. During the 2007-2008 school year, we had five teachers on maternity leave, which is the most ever in the history of the school. During the 2005-2006 school year we had a teacher out on leave due to a serious accident involving her husband.

The 19% and 18% teacher turn over was related to teachers retiring and one who moved away from our community.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0 %
Enrolled in a community college	0 %
Enrolled in vocational training	0 %
Found employment	0 %
Military service	0 %
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0 %
Unknown	0 %
Total	100 %

PART III - SUMMARY

Morning Star School is a K-5 school in Bozeman, Montana. It is named for a Northern Cheyenne Chief, Morning Star who told his people that their future was dependent on education. We are the largest elementary school in our community with 539 students. The mission of our school is: We at Morning Star School are committed to teaching each child academic and social skills today for a bright tomorrow. Our Guideline for Success is: I am a Morning STAR. I am Safe, Thoughtful, Accepting and Respectful. We set high standards for both behavior and academics.

Our school and school community work together to provide challenging and unique learning opportunities for students and believe that all students can learn. Ours is a very collaborative school with teachers planning together as teams and working closely with parents who are an integral part of our school. We have a special education resource program and a program for students who are challenged emotionally. Students from throughout our elementary district, attend the latter program. We have a low percentage (8%) of low socio-economic students at Morning Star School.

Our school is committed to the concept of developing the “Whole Child”. As a reflection of this belief, the traditions in our school are varied and offer students a wide range of opportunities.

- * In August, before school begins, students and parents are invited to the school and their new classroom for a “Sneak Peek”! There are tours for new families; a time to meet new teachers and an opportunity to connect with peers and previous teachers.

- * We have an evening Orientation in August before school starts to welcome kindergarten parents. We cover topics such as curriculum, behavior standards and give parents a chance to meet their child’s teacher. Parents in grades 1-5 attend Open House in mid September to meet with their child’s teacher.

- * We celebrate Native American Heritage Day in September with cultural activities, native dancing and with our principal sharing the stories of Chief Morning Star, our school’s namesake.

- * The Chinese New Year celebration in our school includes a dance through the school led by an authentic Chinese lion head mask. Students are invited to wear traditional dress and make masks, puppets, and lanterns to carry in the parade.

- * Crazy Hair Day is a school favorite that is held on Halloween.

- * Knowing that life skills are important as part of our Health Enhancement Program we have a climbing wall, cross country skiing for fourth and fifth graders, and ice-skating. (Our rink is built and maintained by parents with assistance from a Health Enhancement teacher.) We have a very successful walking program for students during the fall and spring. Students can earn toe tokens for distances walked during their noon recess. Our PAC (Parent Advisory Council) assists in funding these programs.

- * The major fundraiser for our PAC is a Parents’ Night Out event. It is an opportunity for parents to get together and has raffles and both a silent and live auction.

- * When spring comes to Montana, our students know that it is time to visit the live beehive set up in one of our classrooms and to check our library for the egg incubator. It’s an exciting day to find the queen bee; see honey in the hive; or see the chicks hatch!

- * Field trips in our school are an extension of the curriculum.

- * In January, our students look forward to the National Geography Bee. Most years one of our students makes it to the state level.

- * In April, our fourth grade students present a musical for their parents and the rest of the school. In May they have the opportunity to attend the Farm Fair that is held on a working ranch about 20 miles from our school. Students learn about agriculture since it is a major industry in our state.

- * Every grade level in our school plans enrichment events to enhance the curriculum. Examples of this range from having guest scientists in the school demonstrating to and working with students; to having Artists in Residence where students having training from an artist with a final product that sometimes becomes an installation in our school; to fifth graders who have a cross country ski day in the mountains where they ski to

stations set up to learn about snow.

* We often hear “Dads” tell us that after coming to school in second grade to help carve pumpkins or participate in the Paul Bunyan breakfast, they feel comfortable being involved in schools throughout their children’s school experience!

* Our classes each have half an hour of Spanish instruction per week. Our PAC hires a coordinator who recruits volunteers and prepares the curriculum. We have a partnership with Montana State University, where students enrolled in the Spanish curriculum get credit for teaching Spanish at Morning Star School. This partnership has received honors and recognition.

* Examples of our school reaching out to a broader community are that our students design and create placemats used for our community’s holiday dinner for foster parents and children. We create artwork for our county’s Christmas tree that stands in the hall leading to the Governor’s office in our state Capitol building.

Our school’s accomplishments can be summarized in the following way: We believe in each child’s ability to learn and know that we as the adults in the school are responsible to make this happen. We do this by providing effective instruction where we differentiate to meet the wide variety of learners in our school. We are team players and share our knowledge and expertise as we collaborate with each other and with others outside our school. Three of our teachers are currently teacher trainers in the areas of spelling and writing. We have high expectations for others and ourselves and don’t settle for mediocrity. There is warmth in our school that visitors notice immediately. Students with unique needs or challenges are integrated within the school. Students are responsible learners and citizens. Our parents, students, and staff work together as strong teams! Teachers mentor one another; plan together; provide leadership both within the school and district; have a love of learning themselves and have a “can do” attitude. Students are at the center of all decisions made at Morning Star School!

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

We will summarize the trends in our data tables, by subject area and grade level. We have two more years of data for our fourth grade since the state did not test students in third and fifth grades the first two years of the MontCAS CRT.

Fourth Grade Math: The 2003-2004 math results showed that only 42% of our students scored proficient (proficient and advanced proficient). It was the first year the test were given and test scores were low throughout the state. Of course this was of major concern to us. We analyzed the data; provided professional development for teachers and created worksheets that correlated to the computation standards. From this low we have shown progress with students who score proficient in each succeeding year as follows: 68%, 84%, 80% and 81%. The data from 2007-2008 (81% proficient) reflect the first year of using the Everyday Math program as a basis for teaching the math standards. Because we adopted it K-5, our upper grades did not have the benefit of previous years teaching of math vocabulary and skills. We have also worked to increase the number of students scoring advanced proficient. Over the five years, our improvement is as follows with students scoring advanced proficient: 12%, 25%, 49%, 31% and 48%.

Third Grade Math: We have had 92%, 90% and 94% of our student proficient. We have increased the number of advanced proficient students from 41%, 54 % to 68% for 2007-2008.

Fifth Grade Math: We have had 78%, 89% and 83% of our fifth grade students score proficient. We believe the drop for the last year was due to using a new math program, Everyday Math since there was so much new vocabulary and skills to teach. We had a hard time following the pacing guide we established at fifth grade because of the amount of content we had to cover. We anticipate increasing the percentage of our fifth grade students who score proficient this current year.

Fourth Grade Reading: Our trend has shown that we have increased the percentage of students scoring proficient in reading over the years as follows: 79%, 80%, 98%, 89% and 94%. We have also increased the number of advanced proficient students, however they are hovering around 50 % the last three years. Here are the advanced proficient scores: 37%, 31%, 54%, 52% and 51%.

Third Grade Reading: The trend shows an increase in the percent of students who are proficient. The scores are as follows: 90%, 96% and 95% proficient. We had a dip in our advanced proficient students in third grade as follows: 71%, 66% to 77%. We are not sure why this happened. We continue to use a variety of interventions.

Fifth Grade Reading: The trend shows an increase in the percentage of students who are proficient. These are the fifth grade scores of students who are proficient: 89%, 89% and 96%. We are also able to increase the percentage of students scoring advanced proficient as follows: 45%, 52% to 73%.

We have not had enough students at each grade level for the state to disaggregate data according to subgroups such as free and reduced lunch or special education. However, we do look at them within the building. Our students in the subgroups have made AYP.

Morning Star School does participate in the Montana state assessment program. The state performance levels trajectory is based on the percentage of students scoring proficient (proficient and advanced proficient) followed by Morning Star School's achievement level is as follows:

State Morning Star

Math:

2005-06 Year 1 51% 85%

2006-07 Year 2 51% 86%

2007-08 Year 3 68% 86%

2008-09 Year 4 68% Data not available at this time.

Reading:

2005-06 Year 1 74% 92%

2006-07 Year 2 74% 91%

2007-08 Year 3 83% 96%

2008-09 Year 4 83% Data not available at this time.

The Web site where information regarding the Montana state assessment system may be found is:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Assessment/phase2.html>

2. Using Assessment Results:

Morning Star School uses a balance of both formative and summative assessments, criterion referenced assessments, norm-referenced assessments, progress monitoring assessments and screening assessments to gather data about student performance including knowledge, skills and understandings. Results are used to confirm instructional practices that are successful and those that need to be changed; to focus professional development for teachers; and to assess the quality of instructional materials. In addition to assessments that are part of our basal reading program, we use DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) as our universal screening tool and as a basis to provide interventions to students based on their specific needs. Students in grades K-3 who score intensive on DIBELS receive daily a half hour of instruction from our half time Reading Intervention Teacher. This is a “double dose” of intervention as classroom teachers do intervention also. Students who score strategic, receive interventions from their classroom teacher. (Based on the research on early intervention, we have our intervention teacher work with primary level students.) We administer DIBELS once each trimester. We progress monitor both intensive and strategic students to assess whether they are working at or above their aim line for the growth we expect in that year. When students are not on aim line, we assess our interventions and change them. Our school is participating in a grant that the state of Montana received to train schools in the use of the RTI process. This has proven to be very successful in our school with our RTI team meeting weekly at 7:30 a.m. on Friday mornings. We also use the DRP (Degrees of Reading Power) as both a pretest in the fall and a posttest in the spring in grades 2-5.

In math, not only do we use the assessments that are part of the Everyday Math program, but we use the data we collect from our mid year assessment and end of the year assessment to monitor both our teaching and student learning. We have a math paraprofessional who works with students in grades three through five who need intervention on specific math skills. These skills are identified from daily work and also the MontCAS CRT. To insure that our students know and can use math facts automatically, we use the Math Facts program where students are timed on addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts.

Writing is assessed using rubrics that are aligned with the grade level standards for writing. Based on the results of a district wide writing sample scoring in the spring, we create an action plan to provide instruction in those areas of writing where we need to show improvement.

The standardized testing that the state of Montana uses, the MontCAS CRT, is administered to our third, fourth and fifth graders in March of each year. After receiving our results we analyze them to look for trends,

areas of strength and any areas that need our attention. In conjunction with our district's Long Range Strategic Plan, we set goals for Morning Star School in the areas of reading, math, writing and Foundations (our school climate program).

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Student performance, including assessment data is communicated to parents, students and our community in the following ways:

- * During student, parent and teacher conferences
- * Presentations to our local Board of Trustees and our PAC summarizing our assessment data and the accomplishments of our school.
- * Scoring rubrics are shared with students before and after assessments so that students are clear on the expectations of an assignment.
- * When we send data to parents summarizing the DRP (Degrees of Reading Power) and the MontCAS CRT, we attach a cover letter that gives an explanation of the assessment and the meaning of the student's score. Teachers work closely with parents to insure understanding of these assessments.
- * Our district publishes a District Report Card that is available to our community that summarizes academic achievement, assessment, demographic data, and behavioral data.
- * Our local newspaper and television stations report our CRT test results as soon as the Montana Office of Public Instruction releases them.

4. Sharing Success:

Our school is known in our community and state for the collaboration of our teachers. They develop strong teams amongst themselves and with parents. We have teachers and administrators from other schools visit Morning Star to observe in our school and meet with teachers and administrators. Just last week one of our first grade teachers worked with middle school teachers on spelling. Our teachers present at workshops locally and statewide and are trainers for Six Plus One Trait Writing, Process Spelling and Math. Morning Star teachers present at the state teacher meetings teaching methodologies developed and practiced in our school. Our teachers are curriculum leaders in our district and present at Professional Development Workshops within our district and at our school.

We have been chosen as a Montana pilot school for the RTI (Response to Intervention) process where we are developing interventions and procedures to help students which we will share with other schools in our district and state.

On a yearly basis, Morning Star teachers train paraprofessionals and student teachers for Montana State University. In this way our school has enhanced the teaching profession throughout Montana and the entire nation. Our administrators are mentors for administrative interns, so again we are influencing education at both the state and national level. Our principal presents yearly at the Aspiring Principals Conference which is attended by educators throughout the state of Montana who are interested in learning more about becoming an administrator. Our principal has also served as a mentor to new principals in our district.

These are all opportunities that we will continue to be a part of whether or not we become a Blue Ribbon School.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The mission statement for Curriculum Development in our school district is: The goal of the Bozeman Public Schools is to provide a curriculum that will prepare all students to be productive/functional citizens, by offering a variety of learning experiences for students of all abilities.

Each curriculum is aligned to state and national educational standards while at the same time reflecting the norms and expectations of our community. It is a continually evolving process that is fine tuned to provide optimum learning for all students. This is done by specific curriculum committees and also by Morning Star teachers within their own classrooms. We use multiple assessments to gather data in order to measure and evaluate student achievement, educational programs and to direct instruction in all content areas. Our data is also used to direct professional development. For each curriculum area we have content standards and learner objectives. Teachers use these content standards and learner objectives as their guides when planning instruction. Morning Star School uses an Understanding By Design approach to curriculum, assessment and instructional design with a focus on developing and deepening understanding of important (essential) ideas within the curriculum standards. By using Understanding By Design when planning lessons, Morning Star teachers know the essential goals of their instruction.

Within our various curriculums, we provide opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching. We have identified a large number of literature books that have a mathematical component. We have cross-referenced these books to align with the skills in our math content standards and learner objectives.

Reading: On a daily basis, Morning Star teachers demonstrate to their students a love of reading. As life long learners themselves, they are enthusiastic about teaching reading to their students. Morning Star School uses Houghton Mifflin Reading 2006 as a core program. In addition, we use leveled reading books in guided groups in grades K-3 and in fourth and fifth grade teachers use literature circles where students read leveled materials. Teachers have available to them a variety of researched materials to use as interventions for students. We use Reads Naturally and Six Minute Solutions to help students develop fluency skills. Knowing that the decoding and encoding processes are highly integrated, students are taught to write as they learn to read. Teachers are trained to use 6+1 Traits Writing and Step Up to Writing to teach and assess writing and the conventions of writing. When we looked at our spelling scores in the past, we had concerns. After researching how students best learn spelling, we found a program, Cast a Spell that uses brain research on how students learn to spell. Morning Star teachers have embraced this program in grades one through three with excellent results. Recently we have adopted Sitton Spelling and Word Skills in grades four and five. Our goal has been to have students transfer spelling skills into their everyday writing. Penmanship is taught using D'Nealian Handwriting and as a supplement we have teachers who use strategies from Handwriting Without Tears.

Math: This is the second year of using the Everyday Math Program at Morning Star. Our students' mathematical reasoning and thinking has improved with the frequent use of manipulatives. To challenge students who are advanced in mathematics, we use Continental Math League materials in grades 2-5. Metacognitions skills are emphasized in math instruction. As part of differentiation in math, a para works with students in grades 3-5 who need additional support.

Science: Science instruction at Morning Star School is based on hands on inquiry learning using kits from Foss and Delta Science Modules. Each teacher teaches three kits a year, one in the area of Life Science; one in Earth and Space Science and one in Physical Science. Morning Star School is located in the Gallatin Valley of

Montana, close to Yellowstone Park and in the middle of a beautiful and dynamic natural environment. Our teachers enrich the curriculum by taking field trips to learn about these environments.

Social Studies: Our curriculum is broad based to prepare students to participate in global communities. We begin our Social Studies instruction by focusing on the World of the kindergarten child and branching out from there. Harcourt Horizons is used as a foundation in all grade levels. In third grade Morning Star students learn Bozeman History that takes them on explorations of our community and a trip to the historical part of the cemetery. In fourth grade students learn Montana History and have the opportunity to visit the legislature or take a trip to the restored frontier town, Virginia City.

Health Enhancement: Students love the opportunities provided them through our Health Enhancement program. Students learn about personal health; develop physical skills; develop a love for movement; develop teamwork skills and have the opportunities to explore life long activities. Physical fitness skills are taught and measured. Our school has a climbing wall; cross country skis for our fourth and fifth grade students who can ski in a large field west of our school; an ice rink and students participate in the Walking Program that encourages students to walk to earn “toe tokens” or “turkey tokens” during the Turkey Trot which is held in November.

Music: The music program at Morning Star is a dynamic, expressive program. Students learn the foundations of music while at the same time learning drumming, movement and singing. Fourth graders learn to play the recorders and present a musical production for their parents and the school; fifth graders attend general music classes and band and orchestra and present a performance for their parents and the school. Morning Star students in grades kindergarten through fifth perform a musical program each year for their parents that include choral singing, solos, dance, and instrumental music.

Art: The hallways, entryway and classrooms at Morning Star School are filled with eye-catching artwork! We have the Art Everywhere materials and a collection of Master Artist prints. Through funding from our PAC, we use Artists in Residence at each grade level to expand the opportunities for our students. Examples of the art residencies are glass artists, drummers, theatre groups, and clay specialists. Each fifth class at Morning Star does a Shakespeare play, which is one of the highlights of their last year in our school!

Foreign Language: With budget cuts, our district has dropped foreign language in the elementary schools. However, our parents and teachers feel that it is critical that young brains have the stimulation of learning a different language and that language is an important factor in understanding the cultures of the world. As a result, Morning Star School has developed a partnership with the Spanish Department at Montana State University so that in addition to other community volunteers and parents, students in the Spanish program can earn credit for coming to Morning Star and teaching Spanish. Our PAC funds a coordinator to recruit and train volunteers and to prepare curriculum for Spanish. We use a multisensory approach to learning Spanish. As our principal had a Fulbright to study in Ecuador, every other year, Ecuadorian students who visit Bozeman spend time at Morning Star School giving our students first hand experience with speaking Spanish.

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

Morning Star School uses the Houghton Mifflin Reading 2006 as a core program. We consider our basal program “a launching pad” knowing that there are many other supplemental materials that are needed to make a total program for all kinds of learners. It is important to us that we provide a research-based program for teachers to use. When planning lessons we look at the five big areas of reading. (Phonemic Awareness, Decoding, Vocabulary, Comprehension, Fluency). Our philosophy is that there is a close connection between the process of decoding and encoding, so our writing program is closely connected to our reading program. We know the importance of teaching the material with fidelity, but when it is not working for a reader, we intervene. We do this in a variety of ways. Examples are:

* Teachers use leveled guided groups to meet the wide range of skills in their class. We have a large number of leveled books because in setting budget priorities for our school, this has been a high priority.

* Teachers in grades 3-5 use literature circles with leveled groups in addition to using the basal. In this way we are able to challenge our best readers while being able to scaffold the needs of our most challenged readers. The use of literature circles has increased our student comprehension skills.

* We use data to make decisions about students. Examples of assessments that we use are the DRP (Degrees of Reading Power) in grades 2-5 both as a pretest in the fall and as a posttest in the spring; assessments that accompany the Houghton Mifflin Reading 2006; and DIBELS.

* We use DIBELS as our universal screening in reading. This has proven to be very successful in our school. We have a very limited amount of intervention assistance with a .5 FTE Intervention Teacher and a 1 FTE Special Education Resource Teacher and a 1 FTE Resource Aide. Our district is in the process of moving from a discrepancy model of identifying students who qualify for intervention in a Special Education program to the RTI model. This year our school is one of the pilot schools in the state on Montana and our district for RTI.

This is the process of how we use DIBELS at Morning Star School.

* We formally assess students in May, September and January.

* Any students in grades K, 1 and 2 who score Intensive in May, receive a half hour of intervention with our .5 FTE Reading Intervention teacher the following September. Strategic students receive intervention from their classroom teacher and from trained instructional paras and/or parent or community volunteers.

* After the September DIBELS, we serve all intensive first, second and third graders with our Reading Intervention Teacher. Kindergarten, fourth and fifth grade intensive and strategic students receive intervention from their classroom teacher, from trained instructional paras and/or parent or community volunteers.

* In the mean time we are Progress Monitoring every two weeks all students who have scored intensive or strategic DIBELS to see if they are on “aimline” to be achieving at Benchmark by the end of the year. If they are not, we change interventions with those students and have started having RTI grade level meetings to plan and implement specific interventions to assist those students.

* Historically, we have been very successful at providing the specific interventions for students so that we can exit them from our intervention teacher.

* In January, we pick up kindergarten students who score intensive and continue with any students who continue to score intensive. For the first time, due to a very small number of intensive students, we have been able to serve 4 students in first and second grade who are scoring strategic but close too intensive.

* There classroom teachers, our trained instructional paras, parent and community volunteers provide the very few intensive and strategic students in grades four and five intervention.

2b. (Secondary Schools) English:

This question is for secondary schools only

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

The other curriculum area that we would like to share is our math curriculum as we are committed to providing all students the academic skills that allow them to be successful for a “bright tomorrow”. This is also an area where we have the most challenges. In studying our math scores district wide, we knew that we needed to make a change. We are in our second year of using the Everyday Math Program in grades K-5. We are very pleased with this program as we monitor the metacognition skills that our students are developing in math. We see students willing to take risks in solving math problems and they can talk fluently about problem solving and write about the thinking process that they used to solve the problem. In the first year of the program, we were told that our students’ math scores would most likely be lower than they had been previously. This did not turn out to be true, as we made modest gains overall. There is practical application of math skills in our program while emphasizing the use of manipulatives and hands on learning. Both last year and this year, our school has prioritized spending money to make sure that teachers have the manipulatives

they need to teach Everyday Math. We have used computer programs to assist students in their practicing of math skills. To make the basic computation skills automatic for students we use the Math Facts program. Students learn addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts to a level of automaticity. For the first year, we have a math para available to our school to assist those students in grades 3,4 and 5 who have difficulty with math. We use Everyday Math assessments and the MontCAS CRT to determine those students who qualify for this assistance. We monitor the achievement for these students by using their mid and end of the year math assessments that were designed by our district; by looking at our results on the MontCAS CRT and assessments that are part of the Everyday Math Program.

4. Instructional Methods:

Morning Star teachers know that teaching is not only a science but also an art. The art is being able to plan, instruct and assess lessons that meet the individual needs of their students. Instruction is not a one fits all process! Students all learn differently and the challenge for teachers is to discover what works for each child. The individual needs of students drive instruction and assessment at Morning Star School! With our use of Understanding By Design, teachers know the learning outcomes that they are working towards. They assess prior knowledge to learn what the students know and then move forward planning instruction. Our classes have a wide range of abilities and achievement levels in them resulting in the need to differentiate. Teachers also know that assessment needs to be differentiated if they want to know what students actually know. This means that a student might take a test orally, have a scribe or some other accommodation that allows the student to show what he or she knows.

Our special education program is an excellent example of teachers teaming together and also providing differentiation for students. The differentiation takes place in the regular classroom, in the resource room, or if the student is in an inclusion program, with teachers working closely together in the same environment. Our resource teacher is a leader in our building with knowledge about differentiation and works closely with classroom teachers and within our RTI process to teach and coach her peers on ideas for differentiation.

In addition to the day to day differentiation that takes place in each classroom through the use of guided reading groups, literature circles, rocket math and the many other strategies that teachers use to differentiate instruction, we have other ways of differentiating for students. In differentiating for our “gifted” students we have a mentor partnership with the Honors Program at Montana State University, where our students are paired with an MSU student to pursue an area of personal interest. We offer Continental Math League in grades two through five for advanced math students and Word Masters in grades three through five. Because our teachers have had the opportunity to attend the Brain Conference, teachers utilize many “brain friendly” teaching strategies such as adding color to help the brain remember something of importance.

Morning Star teachers are well trained in a wide variety of instructional methods that allow them to differentiate their instruction. Years ago we worked with Bruce Joyce to learn and fine-tune a variety of models of teaching. These included Concept Attainment and Inquiry that we still use. A strength of the work we did with Bruce Joyce was the peer coaching so that we are very comfortable collaborating with each other! We have teachers trained in Cooperative Learning and in a variety of Direct Instruction strategies. The number of instructional methods we use is vast. These are only a sample of what we use!

5. Professional Development:

In our district and at Morning Star School the purpose of Professional Development is to increase student learning by improving teaching through professional development. Each curriculum committee works closely with our district and building professional development committees to provide the training needed to

effectively teach the curriculum. Professional development training focuses on best practices in each specific curriculum area. This professional development is specific to the curriculum area that is being studied. After having this general training, we move on to more specific training.

Both at the district and building level, we look at data regarding our students' achievement. We look at those content standards where we need to show improvement and do a task analysis of each so that we understand what the problem actually is. From there we provide training for teachers that leads to interventions for students.

Our district has a LRSP (Long Range Strategic Plan) with objectives and action plans. After looking at data from our students, Morning Star teachers meshed our needs with those of the district so that we have our own LRSP that is correlated to the districts. As part of this plan, we determine what Professional Development our staff requires to meet our objectives and fulfill our action plans.

For example, when our students were scoring quite low on math computation assessments, we analyzed the data and determined that it was a systemic problem. Thus, we researched ways to intervene and decided to use a computer program to generate math computation worksheets at all grade levels K-5 that were cumulative and overlapping. A small committee of teachers generated the worksheets for each grade level and then as part of our Professional Development, trained our staff on the use of the worksheets; how to use them as a retouching tool; how to analyze the data from them and how to create new worksheets specific to needs in their own classrooms. This proved to be very successful in increasing our students' computation skills.

6. School Leadership:

In Morning Star School we have a principal and a .5 FTE Assistant Principal. The leadership style can best be described as collaborative with an emphasis on teamwork. Students are at the center of all decisions. The administrators set an example of high expectations while honoring and celebrating the achievements of the school. We are a "problem solving" school and know that we are all here to support each other in the very important work of educating each student for a "bright tomorrow". In the past, our principal has been chosen and honored as Montana's National Distinguished Principal. We are a school that looks for solutions and we have the attitude of "when the going gets tough, the tough get going". Our school is known for the leadership our principals and teachers have in curriculum areas and for being willing to share this knowledge with others. Encouraged by our leadership, teachers in our building work closely together in grade level teams, supporting one another and sharing ideas as they plan together. In our school our instructional paras work to provide both interventions for students who are struggling learners but also for those students who excel beyond their grade level. For advanced learners we have a partnership program with our local university, Montana State University where students in the honors program work with accelerated students in our school, in areas of specific interest to that student. We also have programs facilitated by parents such as Word Masters and Continental Math League.

In developing our building budget, we prioritize the budget to support the goals that we are working on. This might mean the purchase of instructional materials; opportunities to attend professional development activities in targeted areas such as reading, math, technology or social skills.

In working together with our PAC (Parent Advisory Council) we have been able to send two teachers to the Education and the Brain Conference at Harvard, to learn about the most recent brain research and how it affects teaching and learning. Our teachers return and provide in-service to our other teachers. This has been one of the most successful professional development opportunities for our teachers. The strength lies in the expectation of the teachers to return to school and provide knowledge to the rest of the staff.

Our leadership models by example. They stay current in the field of education, but do not jump on each bandwagon. We base decisions on what is researched and in the best interests of students.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: MontCAS Phase 2 CRT

Edition/Publication Year: Published each year

Publisher: Measured Progress

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar		
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	90	92		
% Advanced	68	54	41		
Number of students tested	98	76	79		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	6	3		
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): American Indian					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	0	0	1		
3. (specify subgroup): Asian					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	0	1	0		
4. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested	0	2	2		

Notes:

This test was only given to 3rd grade in years 2005-2006, 2006-2007 & 2007-2008.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: MontCAS Phase 2 CRT

Edition/Publication Year: Published each year Publisher: Measured Progress

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar		
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	97	96	90		
% Advanced	77	66	71		
Number of students tested	98	76	79		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	6	3		
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): American Indian					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	0	0	1		
3. (specify subgroup): Asian					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	0	1	0		
4. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested	0	2	2		

Notes:

This test was only given to the 3rd grade in years 2005-2006, 2006-2007, &2007-2008.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: MontCAS Phase 2 CRT

Edition/Publication Year: Published each year

Publisher: Measured Progress

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	81	80	84	68	42
% Advanced	48	31	49	25	12
Number of students tested	79	81	72	100	84
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	6	5	6	0	9
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): American Indian					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	0	1	1	0	2
3. (specify subgroup): Asian					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	0	2	1	1
4. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	2	1	2	0

Notes:

For the year 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 only 4th grade data is provided because that is the only grade tested in this school in Montana.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: MontCAS Phase 2 CRT

Edition/Publication Year: Published each year

Publisher: Measured Progress

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	89	98	80	79
% Advanced	51	52	54	31	37
Number of students tested	79	81	72	100	84
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	6	5	6	0	9
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): American Indian					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	0	1	1	0	2
3. (specify subgroup): Asian					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	0	2	1	1
4. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	2	1	2	0

Notes:

For years 2003-2004 & 2004-2005 only 4th grade data is submitted because that was the only grade tested in this school in those years.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: MontCAS Phase 2 CRT

Edition/Publication Year: Published each year

Publisher: Measured Progress

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar		
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	83	89	78		
% Advanced	37	45	42		
Number of students tested	84	73	103		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	3	5		
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): American Indian					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	1	1		
3. (specify subgroup): Asian					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	0	2	2		
4. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	1	2		

Notes:

This test was only given to the 5th grade in this state in the years 2005-2006, 2006-2007, & 2007-2008.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: MontCAS Phase 2 CRT

Edition/Publication Year: Published each year Publisher: Measured Progress

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar		
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	96	89	89		
% Advanced	73	52	45		
Number of students tested	84	73	103		
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100		
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0		
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	2	3	5		
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): American Indian					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	1	1		
3. (specify subgroup): Asian					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested	0	2	2		
4. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
Number of students tested	1	1	2		

Notes:

This test was only given to the 5th grade in years 2005-2006, 2006-2007, & 2007-2008.

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